



## 5-Year Plan (2010 to 2015) Lewis County Conservation District

For More Information Contact: **Bob Amrine/District Manager**  
**(360) 748-0083 x115** [bob.amrine@wa.usda.gov](mailto:bob.amrine@wa.usda.gov)



### Organization of the Lewis County Conservation District

The Lewis County Conservation District (LCCD) is a political subdivision of the State of Washington and abides by the authorities, powers and structure contained in RCW 89.08.

- *On January 4<sup>th</sup> 1943 Washington State Secretary of State Belle Reeves signed the certificate creating the Lewis County Conservation District. The Conservation District boundaries encompass all the area in Lewis County including the incorporated cities.*
- *The District is governed by 5 supervisors; three are elected and two are appointed by the Washington State Conservation Commission.*

### Function of the Lewis County Conservation District

To make available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land manager with conservation of soil, water and related natural resources.

### Who We Serve & Why

- *The Lewis County Conservation District serves all stakeholders in the county and works with all those interested in protecting and preserving natural resources.*
- *We provide assistance to promote and maintain best use(s) of natural resources: to achieve good stewardship of natural resources; to enhance, sustain and protect natural resources and to educate those we serve in the importance of natural resources for sustaining the quality of life in Lewis County for future generations.*

### Mission of the Lewis County Conservation District

Lewis County Conservation District provides technical, educational and financial assistance for the conservation, protection and development of natural resources within Lewis County.

### Vision of the Lewis County Conservation District

- *To have all private landowners in the County aware of the District, what it does, how it can help them, and that it is **not** a part of County government.*
- *To encourage landowners to actively participate in conservation actions, personally and collectively.*
- *To have enough available water for all beneficial uses including domestic, irrigation and fish by developing water storage and implementing water conservation practices, and by leveraging the maximum amount of funding possible for these activities.*
- *To reduce the need for regulatory agency intervention by working collaboratively with landowners and these agencies to address issues before regulation becomes necessary.*
- *To implement strong conservation programs that address the quality and quantity of water resources in the County, and balance competing demands on those resources.*
- *To improve the ability to get financial and technical assistance to the appropriate and most beneficial projects.*

### Values of the Lewis County Conservation District

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ▪ <i>Trust</i>                            | ▪ <i>Quality of Product</i>   |
| ▪ <i>Local solutions to local issues</i>  | ▪ <i>Efficiency</i>           |
| ▪ <i>Help landowners with stewardship</i> | ▪ <i>Results-oriented</i>     |
| ▪ <i>Voluntary</i>                        | ▪ <i>Commitment</i>           |
| ▪ <i>Non-regulatory</i>                   | ▪ <i>Transparency</i>         |
| ▪ <i>Partnerships</i>                     | ▪ <i>Responsive</i>           |
| ▪ <i>Honesty</i>                          | ▪ <i>Friendly, personable</i> |
| ▪ <i>Fiscal responsibility</i>            | ▪ <i>Respectful</i>           |

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## **Natural Resource Priorities and Goals:**

### **Water Quality**

- *Measures of success*
  - *Number of acres in conservation plans and number of acres implemented*
  - *Number of cooperators served*
  - *Water quality standards and number of times parameters do not meet standards*
  - *Number of stream segments removed from the 303d list*
  - *Number of water quality restoration plans and acres implemented*

#### **Goals**

- By January 2015 have a demonstrated increase in acres in conservation plans & implementation of plans including increase in numbers of people served
- By January 2015 have an increase in stream segments with water quality standards being met and stream segments removed from the 303d listing
- By January 2015 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres

### **Salmon Recovery**

- *Measures of success*
  - *Number of barriers removed and miles made accessible to fish*
  - *Area of instream and riparian habitat improved*

#### **Goals**

- By January 2015 remove a minimum of 8 fish passage barriers and open up a minimum of 8 miles of habitat
- By January 2015 increase the CREP cooperators with contracts by at least 25 totaling a minimum of 200 acres

### **Flood Control and Water Quantity**

- *Measures of success*
  - *Lower reported losses from flooding*
  - *Increase water storage capacity*
  - *High and low water flows*
  - *Hydrologically recovered watershed area*

#### **Goals**

- By January 2015 have a decrease in reported losses from flooding and an increase in water storage capacity
- By January 2015 have a decrease in turbidity and sediment load and an increase in hydrologically recovered watershed area
- Strive to be able to show demonstrated decreases in high water flows and increases in low water flows

### **Soil and Land Management**

- *Measures of success*
  - *Acres reseeded and or planted with a cover crop*
  - *Soil test completed*
  - *Lowering of water turbidity and sedimentation*
  - *Number of nutrient management plans completed and implemented*

#### **Goals**

- By January 2015 have a demonstrated increase in acres reseeded and/or planted to cover crops
- By January 2015 show an increase in cooperators utilizing soil tests
- By January 2015 have a demonstrated increase of acres in conservation plans & implementation of plans
- By January 2015 have a decrease in water turbidity and sedimentation

## **Responsible Development & Small Acreage Conservation**

- *Measures of success*
  - Number of conservation plans completed and implemented including LIDs (Low Impact Development)
  - Acres of conservation implemented
  - Number of cooperators served

### **Goals**

- By January 2015 have a demonstrated increase in conservation plans completed and implemented including LIDs
- By January 2015 have an increase in acres of cooperators served and conservation implementation

## **Invasive Species**

- *Measures of success*
  - Number of acres treated compared of number of new acres infested
  - Number of locations and acres reported to local weed board
  - Number of people reached with technical assistance

### **Goals**

- By January 2015 increase the number of areas treated compared to number of new acres infested
- By January 2015 increase the number of locations reported to the local weed board and the number of new contacts for technical assistance

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## **Critical Geographic Areas: (attached map)**

- *WRIA 23 – Upper Chehalis River watershed area in Lewis County*
- *WRIA 26 – Cowlitz River watershed area in Lewis County*

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## **Information – Education Priorities and Goals:**

- *By January 2015 increase the number of people reached by having meetings and displays at community events*
- *By January 2015 increase the number of people reached with technical assistance*

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## **District Operations Priorities and Goals:**

- *By January 2015 increase funding dollars available for staff follow-up*
- *By January 2015 increase the amount of requested funding compared to funding attained and priority targets*
- *By January 2015 increase the percentage of stable funding compared to grant funding*

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## **Trends Impacting Conservation in the Lewis County Conservation District**

- Land use changes – increase in fragmentation and part time farming operations
- Flood frequency is increasing
- Lack of funding for conservation
- Increase in certified organic production operations
- Economics driving fragmentation
- Increase in variety of conservation requests and needs

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## **Strategies to Address Trends**

- Educational activities
- Conservation planning services
- Serving the land managers on fragmented ownership
- Financial assistance for conservation implementation

- Assessment or county funding for local needs
- Technical assistance (and funding) for land managers
- Work out a better relationship with NRCS for USDA programs
- Maintaining / fortifying technical services by district personnel
- Watershed restoration services
- Interact more with the flood control authority about districts role in working with land managers work in riparian, water retention, and/or a flood control zone district with inter local agreements

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### Natural Resource Data:

- *Two major watersheds include the Cowlitz and Chehalis*
- *See appendix for additional resource data*

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### Staffing Needs

- Current Staff - 3.6 positions – District Manager, GIS/CREP Specialist, Special Projects Coordinator and Administrative Assistant
- Would add an additional conservation planner, and perhaps a technician through a technical service provider contribution agreement with NRCS

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### Annual Budget Needs

- Annual Budget - \$750,000
- Local and state budget constraints are making our budget very difficult to maintain

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### Key Decision Makers

Strategic Priority	Key Decision Makers
Water quality while maintaining productive (sustainable) agriculture & forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> <li>▪ Conservation Commission</li> <li>▪ Land Managers</li> </ul>
Flood Control & Water Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> <li>▪ County Commissioners</li> </ul>
Soil & land management (erosion, soil quality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> </ul>
Fisheries Habitat, Recovery & Passage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> </ul>
Responsible Development & Small Acreage Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> </ul>
Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Commissioners</li> <li>▪ Weed Control Board</li> <li>▪ General Public</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> </ul>
District Operations & Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Board and staff</li> <li>▪ Conservation Commission</li> </ul>

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### Priority Actions

**Strategic Priority: Water Quality** while maintaining productive (sustainable) agriculture and forestry

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 have a demonstrated increase in acres in conservation plans and implementation; increase in numbers of people served, increase in stream segments with water quality standards met and stream segments off 303d listing, fewer number of water quality accidents, increase in water quality restoration plans developed and acres of plans implemented.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Overall improvement in water quality based on parameters tested by or approved by Ecology	Dec 2013	Water quality monitoring
800 acres upland planned and implemented	Dec 2013	Conservation planning and implementation
25% removal of existing 303d listed segments	Dec 2015	Review of water quality parameters
200 riparian acres planted	Dec 2015	Conservation planning and implementation

### Strategic Priority: Fisheries Habitat, Recovery and Passage

**Measurable Goal:** Continue barrier removal projects, by Jan 2015 increasing miles made accessible, related fish return, area of instream and riparian habitat improved.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Chehalis Basin culvert inventory updated	yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the WDFW database to include replaced culverts on any land use</li> </ul>
Remove / replace 10 barrier culverts (2 per year)	Jan 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain cooperation from landowners</li> <li>Obtain funding sources</li> <li>Maintain current agency partnerships and develop new partnerships with landowners</li> </ul>
Prioritize current condition of upper Cowlitz fish passage barriers	Jan 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventory of Upper Cowlitz fish passage barriers</li> <li>Complete 20 Priority Indexes</li> </ul>
Obtain 20 CREP plans	Jan 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain cooperation from landowners</li> </ul>

### Strategic Priority: Flood Control & Water Quantity

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 have a decrease in reported losses from flooding, an increase in water storage capacity, a decrease in turbidity and sediment load, an increase in hydrologically recovered watershed area, a demonstrated decrease in high water flow and an increase in low water flow.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Influence Flood Control Authority	Sept 2010	District personnel attend meetings and give input and technical advice
Cover cropping on 500 acres	Jan 2011	Implement cover crops as funds allow
Turbidity/sediment/velocity testing	Jan 2012	Test and compare to available historic numbers
Drainage network expansion	Jan 2014	Education small forest landowners
Build and maintain 1 to 2 reservoirs	Jan 2015	Build and maintain 2 reservoirs

### Strategic Priority: Soil & Land Management (erosion, soil quality)

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 have a demonstrated increase in acres reseeded and/or cover crop planted, increase in soil tests completed, an increase in nutrient management plans and implementation, and a decrease in water turbidity and sedimentation.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
SW Area District Cooperative Plan	Sept 2010	Adopt Plan

Convince local work group to recognize the need for cover crops and hayland planting	Jan 2011	Attend meetings
Contract and implement cover crops and hayland planting	Jun 2011	Create contracts
Soil testing increase of 10% each year – 50% increase over 5 years	Jan 2015	Soil testing
15 nutrient plans completed (new & updated each year) – 75 completed in 5 years	Jan 2015	Complete plans

### Strategic Priority: Responsible Development & Small Acreage Conservation

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 have a demonstrated increase in conservation plans completed and implemented including low impact development, an increase in acres of conservation implementation and cooperators served.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Develop a low impact development service	Jan 2014	Get involved with development
20 conservation plans completed	Jan 2015	Conservation planning
Increase in conservation plans implemented	Jan 2015	Plan implementation
Increase in practices implemented	Jan 2015	Practice Implementation

### Strategic Priority: Invasive Species

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 increase the number of acres treated compared to number of new acres of infestation; increase the % of acres eradicated, increase the number of locations reported to weed board, and the number of contacts for technical assistance

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
Identify areas of concern and develop plan	Jan 2011	Document findings Develop plan Obtain funding
Implement plan utilizing annual available funding	Jan 2012	Notify noxious weed board
Continue species depletion	Jan 2013	Eradication
Review impact and success	Jan 2014	Document findings

### Strategic Priority: Education

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 increase the % of requests for assistance responded to, the number of people reached, and the number of people provided with technical assistance.

Benchmark	Timeline	Actions
By next funding cycle, educate recipients on the importance of participation in the local working group and conservation district sessions.	Jan 2011	Reach out programs, information distribution
Increase in % of compliance by cooperators	Jan 2012	Voluntary
Implement participation by recipients of funding and/or technical assistance	Jan 2013	Increase in cooperators
By next planning session have 1000% increase in cooperator participation ( in 2010 out of 150 mail outs – 3 cooperators)	Jan 2015	Convince cooperators to attend meeting

### Strategic Priority: District Operations & Funding

**Measurable Goal:** By Jan 2015 increase funding dollars available for staff follow-up, increase the requested funding amounts (for technical assistance and cost share), and increase the % of stable funding compared to grant funding.

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Contact County Commissioners	Mar 2010	Discuss options – assessment or line item in budget
Get landowner, community support, newspaper support	Jan 2011	Attend meetings and word of mouth
Developed assessment “formula” and obtain approval by County Commissioners	Jan 2012	Work with County Commissioners
Passed Assessment	Jan 2013	Voted on by County Commissioners
Received assessment funding	Jan 2014	Utilize assessment funding to achieve goals

**Or**

<b>Benchmark (line item on County budget)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Contact County Commissioners	Jan 2011	Meet with County Commissioners

## **Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices**

